



Consulate General of the United States of America

Press Release
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Jerusalem

For Immediate Release

Muslim-American Music Group Native Deen Performs in the West Bank and Jerusalem

The U.S. Consulate General in Jerusalem sponsored Muslim-American music group Native Deen for a Palestinian-American cultural exchange program that included live concert performances and workshops in the West Bank and Jerusalem, February 14-16, 2011. Concert performances were held on February 14 at the Al-Hakawati Theater in East Jerusalem and on February 15 at the Palestinian Red Crescent Society in Ramallah.

Native Deen came together in 2000 and embarked on a professional music career to highlight issues confronting Muslims living in America. Playing a fusion of hip-hop and rhythm and blues, the group has performed in over 60 cities around the world and their music and positive message have been embraced by people of all ages and backgrounds. Native Deen's visit was funded by a Performing Arts Initiative grant from the U.S. Department of State and received special funding from the U.S. Consulate General in Jerusalem.

Native Deen is composed of vocalists Joshua Salaam, Abdel-Malik Ahmed, and Naeem Mohammed, as well as percussionists Todd Lowther, Wesley Porter, and Shawn Thwaites. For the Jerusalem performance, the group shared the stage with popular local musicians "Firqat al-Inshad al-Maqdisi," and collaborated with dozens of other Palestinian musicians during performances and workshops in Ramallah, Nablus, Salfeet, and Hebron. They also connected via the internet with musicians in Gaza. Mr. Ahmed commented, "This is a great opportunity to play with Palestinian musicians and hopefully to bring a message of understanding between the American and Palestinian cultures."

Speaking at the Jerusalem concert, Consul General Daniel Rubinstein noted that the music of Native Deen "demonstrates the very best in American music, and they are wonderful ambassadors of American culture... tonight's performance brings together world-class talent for a truly unique musical experience for all."

In addition to the Jerusalem and Ramallah concerts, Native Deen conducted outreach performances at Dar al-Funun wal-Turath in the Askar refugee camp in Nablus, at the Child Happiness Theater in Hebron, and at the American Corner in Salfeet. They also led a master class for music students at An Najah University.

More information about Native Deen may be found at their website: www.nativedeen.com/ns

For more information please contact the U.S. Consulate's Press Office at 02-622-6908 or 02-622-6909 or Hassna Dajani at 054-678-8455.